

at the base of a steep rocky hillside. There were several rock-outcrops and one or two rocky ridges and it was in these areas that all my specimens were captured. Males were fairly common but they had to be "put up." Females were, however, uncommon and were only seen when flying among the outcrops or along the sides of the ridges."

After her close, initial association with this insect, it is being named appropriately, and with pleasure, after Mrs. Mary Smith.

## Practical Hints

During the last half of March, larvae of the Beautiful Gothic (*Leucochlaena oditis* Hb.) can be found after dark in their cliff haunts on the south west coast. They are grass feeders, preferring Sheep's Fescue, particularly where this grows around the bases of large boulders giving shelter. However, larvae also occur in the wild on Couch Grass growing on grassy banks. The larva is a consistent rust-brown colour with blackish marks on each side of the body. Head pale brown marked with two black streaks. Some larvae of the Square Spot Rustic (*Xestia xanthographa* D. & S.) which can be quite large at this early time of year, may be distinguished easily from those of *L. oditis* by the presence of dorsal lines and ochreous or brown spiracular stripe, all features absent from *odites*. From about the 16th to the 24th of March is best for the full grown larva of *oditis*. Later on only odd larvae may be found (Platts).

Many *Micros* pupate in or under bark and should be provided with something similar when kept in captivity. The old books recommend 'cork' or 'rotten willow'. I never seem to come across this kind of thing. Balsa-wood is a perfectly satisfactory alternative and can be bought in packs of assorted shapes and sizes from almost any toy shop. Cut it into suitably-sized pieces and bore holes in *one side only*; I use a screwdriver with a  $\frac{3}{8}$ " blade (W. A. C. Carter).

Setting-boards for *Micros* are costly and not always suitable; in these days of D.I.Y. it is perfectly possible to make one's own. Strips of balsa-wood 1" wide by  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick are readily obtainable at toy-shops. Length is a matter of preference but 12" or 13" is recommended. Glue the strips to  $\frac{3}{4}$ " ply-wood and plane off the edges of the latter flush with the sides of the balsa. The groove should be  $\frac{1}{8}$ " wide and about  $\frac{3}{8}$ " deep. The best way to cut this is with a circular saw but it could, no doubt, be cut with an Exacta knife. The groove can be lined with polyporos but this is not essential. The paper must be smooth, thin, white and opaque — it is best obtained from a firm of printers which generally has a wide selection to choose from. Use a water-soluble paste to stick the paper to the board and, to avoid wrinkles and creases, ensure that the paper is well soaked before it is applied — as is done when paper-hanging. (W. A. C. Carter.)